

History of Virginia's Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Hampton University www.hamptonu.edu
Hampton University, Hampton, VA 23668 804/727-5000

Hampton University was founded during Reconstruction in 1868 by Brigadier General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the 29 year old son of missionary parents. Originally named Hampton and Normal and Agricultural Institute, it prepared African-American men and women to lead and teach their newly freed people. With the aid of the American Missionary Association, the school trained its students to build a viable industrial system on the strength of self-sufficiency, intelligent labor and solid moral character. In 1878, Hampton established a formal education program for Native Americans, beginning the Institute's lasting commitment to serving a multicultural population. Hampton's historic Native American education program spanned more than forty years, with the last student graduating in 1923. Recent initiatives have attracted Native American students to renew their ties with Hampton. In the early years, support for the Institute came from the Freedman's Bureau, Northern philanthropists and religious groups, with the first classroom building erected in 1870. The first baccalaureate degrees were awarded in 1922. On July 1, 1930 the school's name was changed to Hampton Institute, reflecting college-level accreditation. In 1984, Hampton's Board of Trustees formally adopted a university structure and changed the name to Hampton University. This private institution offers 4 year degrees.

Norfolk State University www.nsu.edu
2401 Corprew Avenue, Norfolk, VA 23504-998 804/683-8600

Norfolk State College was founded in 1935. The College, brought to life in the midst of the Great Depression, provided a setting in which the youth of the region could give expressions to their hopes and aspirations. At this founding, it was named the Norfolk Unit of Virginia Union University. In 1942, the College became the independent Norfolk Polytechnic College, and two years later an Act of the Virginia Legislature mandated that it become a part of Virginia State College. The College was able to pursue an expanded mission with even greater emphasis in 1956 when another Act of the Legislature enabled the institution to offer its first Bachelor's degree. The College was separated from Virginia State College and became fully independent in 1969. Subsequent legislative acts designated the institution as a university and authorized the granting of graduate degrees. In 1979, university status was attained. Today, this 4 year, public university is one of the largest predominantly black institutions in the nation. It is committed to pursuing its vital role of serving the people of the Hampton Roads area.

Saint Paul's College www.saintpauls.edu
406 Windsor College Lawrenceville, VA 23868 804/848-3111

With fewer than a dozen students, Reverend James Solomon Russell, a deacon in the Protestant Episcopal Church, opened the Saint Paul Normal and Industrial School in Lawrenceville, Brunswick County, Virginia on September 24, 1888. As word spread about the school more students came. Reverend Russell realized the need for expansion and development. On March 4, 1890 by an act of the General Assembly of Virginia, the school was incorporated as the Saint Paul Normal and History of Virginia's Historically Black Colleges and Universities Industrial School. A collegiate department of teacher training was started in 1922 and was accredited by the Virginia State Board of Education in 1926. The College's charter was amended on December 30, 1941, giving Saint Paul's the authority to grant degrees based on a four-year program. The name of the institution was changed to Saint Paul's Polytechnic Institution. In 1942, degree programs leading to the Bachelor of Science and the Bachelor of Science in Education began. In 1957, the Board of Trustees changed the name of the institution from St. Paul's Polytechnic Institute to Saint Paul's College. The Trustees also approved the reorganization of the curricula to include courses leading to the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science degrees. By formal resolution of the Board of Trustees, the College was opened to students and teachers of all races in 1971. Today, the College serves as a valuable institution in the delivery system of higher education.

Virginia State Universitywww.vsu.edu*P.O.Box 9001, Petersburg, VA 23806**804/524-5000*

Virginia State University was founded on March 6, 1882, when the legislature passed a bill to charter the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. The bill was sponsored by Delegate Alfred W. Harris, a Black attorney whose offices were in Petersburg, but who lived in and represented Dinwiddie County in the General Assembly. A hostile lawsuit delayed opening day for nineteen months, until October 1, 1883. In 1902, the legislature revised the charter act to curtail the collegiate program and to change the name to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. In 1920, the land-grant program for Blacks was moved from a private school, Hampton Institute, where it had been since 1872, to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. In 1923 the college program was restored, and the name was changed to Virginia State College for Negroes in 1930. The two-year branch in Norfolk was added to the college in 1944; the Norfolk division became a four-year branch in 1956 and gained independence as Norfolk State College in 1969. Meanwhile, the parent school was renamed Virginia State College in 1946. Finally, the legislature passed a law in 1979 to provide this 4 year, public entity the present name, Virginia State University.

Virginia Union University www.vuu.edu*1500 North Lombardy Street, Richmond, VA 23220**804/257-5600*

Virginia Union University (VUU) is a historically black university located in Richmond, Virginia. It was formed in 1899 by the merger of two older schools, each founded after the Civil War ended by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. By late 1865, the Civil War was over and approximately 4 million former slaves were to become citizens. Southern states were in upheaval. Both planters and former slaves were trying to figure out what a free labor market would entail. Because so many freedmen had been deprived of formal education and prevented from becoming literate by Southern state laws, they were eager for education (many began to set up their own schools before the war ended). Members of the American Baptist Home Mission Society proposed a "National Theological Institute" to educate freedmen wishing to enter the Baptist ministry. Soon, the proposed mission was expanded to offer courses and programs at college, high school and even preparatory levels, to both men and women. This effort was the beginning of Virginia Union University. Separate branches of the National Theological Institute were set up in Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia, with classes beginning in 1867. Efforts in Richmond were difficult. In 1867, Colver Institute, a VUU predecessor school, was housed in a building long known as Lumpkin's Jail, a former "slave jail." It was owned by Mrs. Mary Ann Lumpkin, the African-American widow of the deceased white owner. In 1899, the Richmond Theological Institute (formerly Colver Institute) joined the Wayland Seminary of Washington, D.C. to form Virginia Union University at Richmond. In 1932, a women's college, Hartshorn Memorial College, established in 1833 in Richmond became a part of Virginia Union University. Storer College, a historically black Baptist college in West Virginia, founded in 1867, merged its endowment with Virginia Union in 1964. Virginia Union University embraces the uniqueness and contributions of the African Diaspora, celebrating the value of cultural and intellectual diversity.

Virginia University of Lynchburgwww.vul.edu*2058 Garfield Ave, Lynchburg, VA 24501-6417**434/528-5276*

In 1866, the Virginia Baptist State Convention founded the Lynchburg Baptist Seminary as an institution of "self-reliance," "racial pride," and "faith." It first offered classes in 1890 as the renamed Virginia Seminary. Under the direction of the second President, Gregory W. Hayes (1891-1906), the school became a pioneer in the fields of African-American education. In 1900, the school was reincorporated as the Virginia Theological Seminary and College and in 1962 became the Virginia Seminary and College. The college was renamed and incorporated as Virginia University of Lynchburg in 1996. Historically, Virginia University of Lynchburg has held the position that, in order to have academic freedom, the concept of financial independence must be incarnated into the hearts and minds of African-Americans and others in our global community. As a private university, Virginia University of Lynchburg continues moving to a posture of interdependence and to foster the spirit of freedom from political and government restrictions.

